

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
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INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
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AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12320

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT,IT
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH SOCIALIST VICE SECRETARY
SIGNORILE

1. AT A LUNCH CONVERSATION ON JUNE 30, SOCIALIST VICE
SECRETARY SIGNORILE GAVE ME HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE FALL
OF PRESIDENT LOENE AND THE CURRENT PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST.
ACCORDING TO SIGNORILE, IT WAS THE COMMUNISTS
WHO ENGINEERED LEONE'S RESIGNATION. WHAT PRECIPITATED
THE COMMUNIST ACTION WAS NOT ANY NEW DAMAGING INFORMATION
ABOUT LEONE--THE INFORMATION TO WHICH THEY LINKED THEIR
DECISION WAS ALL KNOWN A YEAR AGO--BUT THE INTERNAL
SITUATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY INTELF. AS A RESULT
OF THE PARTY'S BAD SHOWING IN THE FIRST TWO ROUNDS OF
ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS AND THE REFERENDA VOTE,
BERLINGUER WAS UNDER SEVERE PRESSURE BOTH FROM THE
RIGHT AND THE LEFT OF HIS PARTY. SOMETHING HAD TO BE
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DONE BOTH TO CONTAIN THIS SITUATION AND TO PLACATE THE
RESTIVE BASE OF THE PARTY. THEREFORE IT WAS DECIDED
TO BRING DOWN LEONE AND IN THAT WAY DEMONSTRATE THE
PARTY'S STRENGTH AND DECISIVENESS. SIGNORILE ADDED,
IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION THAT DESPITE THE PRESSURE
ON HIM, BERLINGUER WAS IN NO DANGER OF LOSING HIS
POSITION AS PARTY SECRETARY. NONETHELESS, THE

COMMUNIST PARTY WAS IN A FUNDAMENTAL DILEMMA, NOW BECOMING MORE ACUTE, OF EITHER PROGRESSING FURTHER TOWARD SOCIAL DEMOCRACY OR SLIPPING BACK TOWARD STALINISM. SIGNORILE WAS INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE PARTY WOULD ADVANCE BUT THAT THE PROCESS WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND SLOW. HE SAID THAT HIS OWN PARTY WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO ASSIST THIS DEVELOPMENT WHICH HE THOUGHT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD WELCOME.

2. REGARDING THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST, SIGNORILE SAID THAT HE AND CRAXI WERE CONVINCED THAT THE COMMUNISTS WANTED TO MAKE A DEAL WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND HAD ALREADY REACHED SOME UNDERSTANDING WITH ANDREOTTI. THE UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT IN RETURN FOR COMMUNISTS SUPPORT DEMOCRATS WOULD AGREE TO AN EVENTUAL MODEST CABINET RESHUFFLE, POSSIBLY LEADING TO THE INCLUSION OF ONE OR TWO TECHNICAL MINISTERS FAVORED BY THE COMMUNISTS, AS WELL AS AN AGREEMENT TO CALL NO NATIONAL ELECTION BEFORE 1981.

3. ACCORDING TO SIGNORILE, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FELL INTO ROUGHLY THREE GROUPS IN THEIR REACTION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST. ONE, CENTERING AROUND ANDREOTTI AND ZACCAGNINI BUT ALSO INCLUDING SOME WHO WANTED ZACCAGNINI OUT OF THE SECRETARIAT, FAVORED ZACCAGNINI FOR PRESIDENT A SECOND GROUP GAVE THE

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APPEARANCE OF FAVORING A SOCIALIST CANDIDATE BUT IN FACT PREFERRED A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT. THE THIRD WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SOCIALIST IN THE QUIRINALE. THE SOCIALIST THEMSELVES, SIGNORILE SAID, INTENDED TO DO EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO PREVENT A COMMUNIST-CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AGREEMENT SINCE SUCH AN ACCORD WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF MOVING TOWARD THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE.

4. SIGNORILE STATED THAT THE SOCIALISTS WANTED TO REACH THEIR OWN AGREEMENT WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AGREEMENT ON A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ALONG WITH AN UNDERSTANDING THAT AT SOME DEFINITE TIME AROUND THE TURN OF THE YEAR A NATIONAL ELECTION WOULD BE HELD AFTER WHICH, DEPENDING ON THE RESULTS, THE SOCIALISTS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WOULD PROBABLY ENTER A NEW CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT. SIGNORILE ADDED THAT THOUGH HIS PARTY HAD NOT DECIDED ON A SINGLE SOCIALIST CANDIDATE, THAT HIS PERSONAL PREFERENCE WAS FOR GIOLITTI. THE SOCIALISTS HAD TO BE UTTERLY INSISTENT IN PRESSING FOR A SOCIALIST SINCE ANY SIGN

OF COMPROMISE WOULD DESTROY THEIR CANDIDATEJS CHANCES.
SIGNORILE MADE CLEAR THAT HIS PARTY WOULD OPPOSE LA
MALFA TO THE E D AND RECKONED THAT THE CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATS WOULD NOT WANT TO PUT INTO THE QUIRINALE
SOMEONE WHOM THE SOCIALISTS CONSIDERED UNACCEPTABLE.
TO THAT EXTENT, HE SAID, THE SOCIALISTS HAVE A VETO
IN THE SELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT.GARDNER

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